

Michigan House Standing Education Committee Meeting
Sept. 25, 2013
Testimony by Stefanie Huffaker

Distinguished Committee Members,

I appreciate your time and sacrifice to serve our great state and the good people here. I would like to take just a few minutes of your time.

I come here with great concern for the future educational opportunities for the children of Michigan. No one will disagree that many of our children are struggling in school. I agree that on the surface, having a "common core" of standards sounds good. However, this process of securing "free" government prizes to help our schools seems suspect.

The application process for Phase 1 lasted only two months, from November 2009 to January 2010. Of the 500 points possible for each state to earn on the application, 70 points were given if the state signed on to "adopting common standards." However, these standards were not even published until March of 2010. So in essence, 45 states signed on to Common Standards, sight unseen, Michigan being one of them. Thankfully, almost half of those states have since postponed implementation, again Michigan being one of them. (<http://truthinamericaneducation.com/common-core-state-standards/states-fighting-back-map/>) On that same application, 47 points were awarded if the state agreed to implement data retrieval systems to track the kids; data systems not yet fully explained. That 47 points plus the 70 = 117 out of 500 which is 23% of the possible points.

During Phase 1, Massachusetts earned an A with the highest possible amount of points on the application for their already successful math and English programs, so they did not sign on to adopting different curriculum standards, thinking theirs were already very good. They placed 13th. This meant they didn't win any money. During Phase II, the only thing they changed on their application was their willingness to adopt common standards. They moved up in ranking to #1 and won \$250 million.

(<http://www.bizjournals.com/boston/stories/2010/08/23/daily16.html?page=all>)

I believe that shows the importance of this "adopting of common standards" to earn this free prize money. As a note, on the application, the states could only earned 10 points out of 500 for intervening in "lowest achieving schools," which would seem to be of far more valuable and worth more points towards receiving funding than collecting data and setting new standards. (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/executive-summary.pdf>)

I would like to quote from a Fox News article from Aug 8.

"Stanford Prof. James Milgram, the only mathematician on the Common Core Validation Committee, refused to sign off on the math standards, calling the whole thing "in large measure a political document" during testimony he gave in May 2011. "I had considerable influence on the mathematics standards in the document. However, as is often the case, there was input from many other sources -- including State Departments of Education -- that had to be incorporated into the standards," he said during the testimony. "A number of these sources were mainly focused on things like making the standards as non-challenging as possible. Others were focused on making sure their favorite topics were present, and handled in the way they liked," ... adding that it led to a number of "extremely serious failings" in the Common Core." (<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2013/08/30/new-age-education-fuzzy-math-and-less-fiction/>)

It is my contention that the State of Michigan like so many other states, signed on to something before understanding the details. Former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi said of the Affordable Healthcare Act, that, "we need to pass it so we could know what's in it." We are now learning that it is anything but affordable. Where the government is concerned, "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me."

Please, let's learn from that. Let's stop the implementation of Common Core while we can. Let's not implement Common Core at all in Michigan. You have the power to stop this process and change your minds. You agreed to adopt new standards in exchange for free prize money, but you didn't even get any of that. Please don't feel obligated. Stand up and say, "No thanks. We can take care of our own kids without you." Common Core is just common politics. Our kids deserve better.

Thank you for your time.

Respectively,

Stefanie Huffaker

Resident of Imlay City, Mi

Wife of Scott Huffaker, Cardiologist with Covenant Hospital

Homeschool Mother of 4, Public School Mother of 2

Child attending Oakland University, Child attending Lansing Community College

Child, student of Brigham Young University, currently serving mission in Brazil

Seeds of Faith Homeschool Leadership Team

Registered BSA Scout Leader for 14 years

BS in Psychology from MSU